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AN APOLOGETIC FOR XENOPHON'S *MEMORABILIA*¹

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For two or three decades there has been a growing tendency on the part of many writers about Socrates to minimize the value of Xenophon's contribution to our knowledge of Socrates. At times it has seemed as if no words were too harsh to express this modern contempt for Xenophon's brain-power, his method of composition, and the resultant picture of Socrates which he has given. It is not simply ingenious and fantastic souls like Joël who have so expressed themselves. Even scholars of high repute, Gomperz, Wendland, Heinrich Maier, Burnet, have in greater or less degree assumed this attitude.² Such a situation might, of course, have been expected to result from the exaggerated honor and reverence formerly accorded Xenophon. After constituting the supreme court of appeal on matters Socratic in some past generations, he has, by a very human sort of reaction, not only been removed from the bench, but even at times thrown quite out of court and denied the right to appear either as advocate or witness.

Thus it is said that Xenophon lacked any real acquaintance with Socrates worth mentioning; that he was incapable, in any event, of appreciating the real message of Socrates to men; that he pieced his supposed reminiscences together from his own non-Socratic writings as well as from Plato, Antisthenes, and others; that his work was the product, not of recollection, but rather of meditation—there appears to be some dispute on this point, whether Xenophon was even capable of meditating—but *possibly*,

¹ This paper was read, substantially in its present form, at the meeting of the American Philological Association at Princeton, December 29, 1915.

² Joël, *Der echte und der xenophontische Sokrates*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1893, 1901; Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, II, especially pp. 61 ff.; Wendland, *Anaximenes von Lampsakos*, p. 69; Heinrich Maier, *Sokrates: sein Werk und seine geschichtliche Stellung*, Tübingen, 1913; Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo*, Introduction, pp. xii ff., and *Greek Philosophy*, Part I, pp. 147 ff.

we may say, the product of meditation, eked out in any case by use of shears and paste-pot. And the result of such antecedents is that we have in the *Memorabilia* a work not only of no historical value, but full of commonplace and triviality—fictitious, if you please, even so—and showing us a Socrates who is merely a tiresome pedant and moralizer and paragon of virtue.

It is a few of these criticisms that I should like to analyze or comment upon. First then, can Xenophon qualify as a witness? Various writers have estimated the period of Xenophon's acquaintance with Socrates at three or four years only,¹ but there is certainly no reason why the acquaintance should not have extended over a decade. For we may assume, I think, that Xenophon was born about 430 B.C., and surely Socrates may have been attracted to Xenophon when the latter was but eighteen or twenty quite as easily as he was to other young men at that age, Alcibiades, for instance, and Glauco.² What "inner probability" there is against this, as Maier asserts,³ I have been unable to see. For Xenophon must have been an energetic and wholesome young fellow;⁴ the *Anabasis* shows that he had sufficient self-confidence so as hardly to have been held back on his part by excess of modesty; his practical bent, one might suppose, would have appealed to Socrates rather than repelled him; and although Xenophon was, admittedly, no philosopher, yet every word he writes of Socrates bears witness that he had somehow or other been fired with a great love and admiration for him. Is it not most probable that such enthusiasm developed under the inspiration of fairly close personal friendship? I believe then that Xenophon had adequate opportunity for obtaining a true and deep idea of Socrates and that the "inner probability" is at least even that he took advantage of it. This does not necessarily mean that he belonged to the *most* intimate circle of Socrates' followers. Maier is right, I believe, in saying that the story Xenophon tells in *Anabasis* iii. 1. 4 ff., of consulting

¹ Busse, *Sokrates*, p. 9, n. 2; Maier, *Sokrates*, p. 6, n. 2. I purposely omit E. Richter's anarchistic assertion, that Xenophon did not know Socrates at all! (*Xenophon-Studien*, in *Jahrb. f. Phil.*, 19 Suppl., pp. 124 ff.)

² Cf. Plat. *Symp.* 219E; Xen. *Mem.* iii. 6. 1.

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ Besides the picture in the *Anabasis* cf. Diog. L. ii. 6. 1-2.

Socrates about his projected visit to Asia, does not suggest the greatest intimacy. And the *Memorabilia* gives one perhaps a similar impression. Xenophon, too, was not of a temper that would have been satisfied with merely talking and thinking about life for ten years with any man. His nature demanded action also—in which respect it was thoroughly Greek—but this does not preclude a fair degree of acquaintance and friendship between him and Socrates.

Xenophon's active military life for some years after 401, while it gave him greater breadth of view and discrimination of judgment, doubtless blurred somewhat the distinctness of his impressions of Socrates. Is it likely that it destroyed their value? We may pass over the theory that Xenophon knew shorthand,¹ and even the strong probability that a man as practical as he should have made memoranda of conversations of Socrates, as we are told Euclides did, and Simon, the shoemaker;² it still remains no great feat for an ancient Greek memory to have remembered and recorded events of ten or twenty years before. Even today many a man of forty could write largely from memory a small volume of reminiscences of some strong personality with whom he came in contact at school or college twenty years before. The date of composition of the *Memorabilia* is of course an important factor in this question, and it appears to be impossible of exact determination. We may assume that the composition of at least the first two chapters of the *Memorabilia* was due primarily³ to the publication of the attack on Socrates by the sophist, Polycrates, about 393. If that is so, the reply would presumably have come from Xenophon soon after, for polemics are written while indignation is fresh. Nor can we believe that his being at his country seat at Scillus—if that was where Xenophon lived as early as 393—would have postponed very long his getting knowledge of Polycrates' work.

¹ Advocated by Gitlbauer from Diog. L. ii. 6. 3 (*Denkschr. d. Akad. d. Wiss.*, Wien, 1896, II Abh., p. 17; cf. Wessely, *op. cit.*, IV Abh., 44).

² Cf. Plat. *Theaet.* 143A; Diog. L. ii. 13. 2. It might be noted that an alternative interpretation of Diog. L. ii. 6. 3 understands just such memoranda to be there referred to rather than stenographic notes.

³ As demonstrated by Cobet, *N.L.*, 662 ff.

Scillus was too near to Olympia for that.¹ For part, then, of the *Memorabilia* Xenophon would have had to stretch his memory back only some ten years. One or two chapters, however, do appear most naturally to refer to a time well on toward the middle of the fourth century.² For such parts we should suppose, then, one of two things: either a greater element of fiction than perhaps readers have generally been accustomed to believe existed in the *Memorabilia*, or the use of written material.

In the first connection I believe that we have often been in danger of forgetting—or at least of forgetting to apply the thought—that to the ancient Greek the distinction between fact and fiction is a vague one. Certainly they never drew the distinction with the meticulous care of the modern. The essential distinction for them was between *truth* and *untruth*. A narrative either of fact or of fiction may be true, and one kind quite as well as the other may be for all practical purposes grossly untrue. We recall, of course, Thucydides' familiar words about the speeches of his history—which, while fictitious, are for the most part essentially true—and Aristotle's dictum that impossible probabilities are to be preferred to possible improbabilities.³ Parts of the *Memorabilia* may well be, then, what we would call fiction: they are not for that reason untrue, nor unworthy of attention.

Again, Xenophon may very probably have read all the existing literature he could find on Socrates. In our learned age we ought not to be surprised at that. If Xenophon did, as a matter of fact, "make himself familiar with the literature of his subject," he did just what a modern historian would demand that a biographer should do.⁴ But Xenophon is charged with using written material in a very strange, not to say *stupid*, sort of way. Let me give two examples of the way he is supposed to make use of *his own* writings. First, one from Gomperz—the only proof which he advances from the *Memorabilia* itself to show that that work is in

¹ Although Plutarch, *De exilio* 603B (iii. 561), does allude to it as a very small place.

² Most of all, perhaps, *Mem.* iii. 5.

³ Thuc. i. 22. 1; Aristot. *Poet.* 24. 19.

⁴ Cf. A. B. Hart, *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1915, p. 727a: "We expect from writers of personal memoirs and autobiographies that they shall refresh their memories from diaries and letters and other data."

part unhistorical. "We find a passage of the ['Memorabilia']," he writes, "dealing with peoples of Asia Minor, the Mysians and the Pisidians, describing the peculiarities of the country they inhabit and the manner in which they carry on war. These subjects are here treated of precisely in the same way as in the 'Anabasis' . . . in which Xenophon . . . incidentally had occasion to give an account, based on personal observation, of the above-named tribes. The true state of the case is again as clear as daylight. It is Xenophon himself that speaks to us through the mouth of Socrates."¹

Taking these words at their face value and without verification one would naturally suppose that Xenophon in the *Anabasis* had described the peculiarities of the Mysians and Pisidians at some length and from his own observations, as he does the life of the Armenians; further, that in the *Memorabilia* he puts a similar detailed description into the mouth of Socrates. If that is so, the *Memorabilia* must be largely discounted at once; its value for the life and thoughts of Socrates would obviously be slight. Now what are the facts? Xenophon in his travels hardly entered the confines of either Pisidia or Mysia. His fullest "description" of these countries implicitly *disclaims* personal knowledge. In spite of its great length—six lines—I venture to quote it entire. (Xenophon is reporting the speech which he himself made after being chosen general.) "We understand," he says, "in the case of the Mysians—whom we would deny are better men than we, and who inhabit many large and prosperous cities in the King's country—we understand likewise in the case of the Pisidians, and in the case of the Lycaonians we saw personally, that they have occupied the positions which command the plains and thus plunder the Persians'

¹ *Greek Thinkers*, II, 62. As the authorized translation seems not to give the exact shades of meaning in one or two points, I append the German (*Griechische Denker*, II, 50 f.): "Denn was sollen wir dazu sagen, wenn an einer Stelle [der Memorabilien] von kleinasiatischen Völkerschaften—den Mysern und Pisidern—von der Eigentümlichkeit ihrer Wohnsitze und der Art ihrer Kriegsführung in ganz ähnlicher Weise die Rede ist wie in der sogenannten Anabasis . . . in der Xenophon . . . hierbei auch auf jene ihm durch persönliche Anschauung wohlbekannten Völkerschaften zu sprechen kommt. Auch hier ist der Sachverhalt demnach ein Sonnenklarer. Es ist Xenophon selbst, der durch den Mund des Sokrates zu uns redet."

country of its harvests.”¹ In two or three other passages there are scant allusions to the Mysians or Pisidians being constant scourges of the Persians. That is all in the *Anabasis*.

Now in the *Memorabilia* the one and only passage referring to these peoples is this: “Have you heard of the fact,” asks Socrates of the younger Pericles, “that Mysians and Pisidians in the King’s country, by holding very strong positions, and adopting a light armor, are able to overrun the King’s country and do much damage while themselves living independent?”² Simply this—a brief allusion—it is obviously not a description—requiring in Greek thirty-one words: Gomperz’ ostensible *summary* requires thirty-six. Actually then Xenophon makes Socrates say nothing which he is not quite likely to have said. There is no intimate personal knowledge displayed. Socrates’ words are true to life. For in a state like Athens, with high general intelligence and an extensive commerce, we may fairly assume that it was a matter of common knowledge both that the Mysians maintained their independence of Persia and also how in general they did it. Certainly we have no adequate ground for asserting that Socrates did not actually speak in substance just as Xenophon represents him. It would perhaps be rash to deny, in view of the ancient Greek attitude toward the reporting of speeches, literal accuracy, and similar matters, that it is possible we have in the *Memorabilia* passage only what Socrates might have said under the given circumstances. There is, too, a general similarity of thought in the passages from *Anabasis* and *Memorabilia*, and slight verbal similarity; the phrases ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ χώρα and τὴν χώραν occur in both; ἐρπυμνά appears as a noun in the *Anabasis* and as an adjective in *Memorabilia*. But this similarity is perhaps fully accounted for psychologically by the fact that both speeches have passed through one and the same mind, whoever may originally have spoken them. In any event there is no distortion of the picture of Socrates involved. He does not speak in the least as a returned Asiatic traveler or a professional ethnologist, as one might suppose from Gomperz’ words, but entirely true to character.

¹ *Anab.* iii. 2. 23.

² *Mem.* iii. 5. 26.

Even more outrageous statements have recently been made by Heinrich Maier, professor of philosophy at Göttingen, in his elaborate volume called *Sokrates*. This writer has an ingenious way of creating his premises by fiat and then, in wonderfully successful fashion, drawing conclusions therefrom. Take all his statements of fact as facts, and his arguments appear conclusive. But once doubt his affidavits and proceed to verify them, and the whole collapses. I will give just one of a half-dozen possible examples of the way in which he deals with the *Memorabilia*, while he is proving—as he asserts—that it is Xenophon who speaks there for the most part, not Socrates.

"Perhaps the most striking part of the *Memorabilia*," he writes,¹ "is the strategic and military discourses of the third book. Whence does Socrates get such wisdom? We know today. It is derived from Xenophontine sources. So, for example, the third chapter, where Socrates enlarges on the duties of a cavalry general and with surprising technical knowledge goes even into the details of the service, is entirely an extract [*lediglich ein Auszug*] from the *Hipparchicus*. . . ." Now what is this surprisingly intimate knowledge of the subject (*überraschende Sachkunde*) to which Maier refers? Let me enumerate the points on which Xenophon's Socrates touches in the chapter mentioned:

1. The office of cavalry commander involves command of both horses and riders.

2. Cavalrymen may appear with horses that are not usable: bad in the feet or bad in the legs, or diseased, or so poorly fed as not to be able to keep up, or so untrained as not to stand where posted, or so intractable that they cannot be gotten into position at all. The commander therefore ought to have an eye for the horses.

3. The commander should make his men able to mount easily. (We are not told how.)

4. Maneuvers should be held, not on the parade ground, but under conditions likely to prevail in war. (The latter are not described.)

5. As many men as possible should be able to shoot from horseback. (Again, there is no elaboration of this point.)

¹ Maier, *Sokrates*, p. 32. In my translation I follow the German closely.

6. The commander should consider how to whet the spirits of his men. (No method is suggested.)

7. The commander should try to make his men obedient. In any sphere men obey the person they think excels therein, and so in the cavalry. But they must be shown further that it is more honorable, and safer to obey.

8. The commander must give some attention to being able to speak, for speech is the vehicle by which men learn all things.

9. Just as Athenian choruses were pre-eminent in interstate festivals, not so much from physical superiority as from the ambition that fired them to excel, so the Athenian cavalry might be developed to superiority in equipment, discipline, and spirit, provided the men believed they could thus win praise and honor.

This is all. Is there any knowledge in the list that could not be evolved, I will not say by a man with the general insight and veteran military experience of Socrates, but by a modern, classically trained college Senior, even though he were city born and bred and had never had a pair of reins in his hands? I believe it is plain there is not. Even the foregoing general suggestions, moreover, are in the original put not dogmatically as statements of fact, but mostly in interrogative form: "If they bring you poor horses what good will the cavalry be?" "Won't you make your men able to mount easily?" and the like. There is certainly little or no *enlarging* on the subject; no methods, but only suggestions.

There are undoubtedly a considerable number of parallels in thought and wording between *Memorabilia* iii. 3 and *Hippiarchus* i. But this indicates nothing more, I believe, than that both chapters have passed through the mind of Xenophon: the same man writing about the same subject, especially one with which he is thoroughly acquainted, will naturally say similar things and even use the same phrases. Further, if Xenophon's Socrates has the same ideas that Xenophon, as we know him in his non-Socratic writings, also has, that is not forthwith to be taken as proof that Xenophon ascribes his own thoughts to Socrates. We must first show that Socrates himself would not in all probability have had those thoughts. For if, as most people assume, Xenophon enjoyed in his early manhood a fair degree of intimacy with Socrates, we

should naturally suppose that during that association he got from Socrates many an idea which became a part of his own nature. It is indeed entirely possible that Socrates spoke substantially as Xenophon reports him in the chapter we are considering, using the natural and reasoned order of thought which Xenophon ascribes to him, and that Xenophon later, on writing the *Hipparchicus*, perhaps consciously, perhaps unconsciously, used much the same outline, which he then filled in. But even granting that our *Memorabilia* chapter is fiction, even that it was written after *Hipparchicus* i and embodies in part the topical outline of that chapter—all of which it is far from needful to grant—it would still be *true* fiction. Xenophon has not, as would be imagined from an untested reading of Maier's words, pictured Socrates as a specialist in the handling of cavalry. Quite the contrary; he is throughout and consistently the layman bringing his trained mind to bear on the problems of the profession concerned. That he was accustomed to do just this with insight and helpfulness in the case of many different professions, is the testimony of Plato as well as of Xenophon.

But Xenophon is alleged to have made very extensive use of Plato's writings, also, in the *Memorabilia*. Maier gives a long series of instances of this borrowing. Of almost each one of the series he declares that it proves Xenophon's indebtedness, and regularly he garnishes his declaration with a "*ganz offenbar*" or some one of the other imposing expletives with which it is the fashion in some circles to attempt to bolster weak arguments. Finally¹ as a culminating example he takes a short passage of a dozen lines from the close of *Mem.* iv. 5 and beginning of iv. 6. The latter part of this (iv. 6. 1) depends, he says, quite unmistakably on *Phaedrus*, 262AB (*lehnt sich . . . ganz unverkennbar an*). Now the gist of Xenophon's passage is this: Socrates thought those who had knowledge what the nature of things was in each case (*εἰδότες τί ἐκαστον εἴη τῶν ὄντων*) could also instruct others; those who did not have knowledge were naturally deceived (*σφάλλῃσθαι*) and deceived others too. Therefore he never ceased to consider what the nature of things in each case was. Plato, on

¹ Maier, *Sokrates*, pp. 57 ff.

the other hand, in the middle of the *Phaedrus* remarks that the ability to mislead (*ἀπατᾶν*) in speech depends on knowledge of similarities and differences of things, by which knowledge one can little by little lead one's hearers away from reality. "The man who is not acquainted with what the nature of things in each case is" (*ὁ μὴ ἐγνωρικῶς ὃ ἔστιν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων*) will not be able to do this.

Practically, then, the similarities of these two passages are: first, a very Socratic emphasis upon knowledge; secondly, three Greek words. It is, of course, conceivable that Xenophon had read the *Phaedrus*, and that the idea of knowledge of *ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων* had stuck in his mind, but that seems rather a difficult way of accounting for the situation.¹ Is it so strange, really, that two men, both supposedly engaged in reporting the life and words of the same great original, should at times produce passages containing *some* likeness in thought and a phrase of two or three words verbally identical? Rather one would suppose that just this thing would occur many times.

Maier goes on to allege that Plato's *Sophist* 253D is "unmistakably Xenophon's source" in the earlier part of the *Memorabilia* passage (iv. 5. 12). The latter is the section with the strange etymological explanation of *διαλέγεσθαι*, as meaning to deliberate by picking things out by classes (*διαλέγοντας κατὰ γένη τὰ πράγματα*). In Plato, without any attempt at etymologizing or at definition, we have the query raised whether division by classes is a part of the science of dialectic (*τὸ κατὰ γένη διαιρεῖσθαι οὐ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς φήσομεν ἐπιστήμης εἶναι*);). In other words, the proof of borrowing is again a commonplace phrase and remote likeness of thought.

But Maier is not through with this bit of the *Memorabilia*, only a dozen lines in all. Most striking of all (*am frappantesten*) is its connection with *Politikos* 285D-287A. Within the limits of these two pages of Plato, Maier finds these phrases verbally identical with Xenophon's: *τοὺς συνόντας . . . διαλεκτικωτέρους* and *τῶν ὄντων*. (Apparently he forgets that *τῶν ὄντων* has already been used to prove that Xenophon in this same passage borrowed

¹ L. Robin, in *L'Année Philosophique*, XXI (1910), 40-41, writes sensibly on this point.

from *another* dialogue of Plato!) Besides there is the general idea in both passages that Socrates gave his followers ability in dialectic. What a laborious cento, then, we are asked to believe that Xenophon made up with the help of Plato! An idea here, an idea there, a phrase from this book and a phrase from that, and so at last he got a paragraph! This seems, indeed, to be exactly Maier's idea: "One can see here," he says (p. 61), "right into the workshop of the author of the Dialogue-collection,¹ and can follow most beautifully how he works with the fruits of his reading, his borrowed thoughts and thought-sequences, expressions and phrases." "More important still," he concludes, "is the fact that the dependence of the Xenophontine dialectic (*Begriffsdiagnostik*) upon the Platonic, as the latter is developed in the dialectic dialogues, *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*, has been quite conclusively proven" (*völlig stringent bewiesen*). All the steps in this compelling "proof" I have obviously not given here. In its complete form it is made to appear plausible by almost systematic distortion of the facts and constant magnifying of remote possibilities into assured certainties. Those who would see how extensive this is must follow Maier's arguments step by step, with the texts of supposed original and supposed imitator open before them.

While I am far from denying offhand that Xenophon may have read, and also used, Plato's Socratic writings, I do maintain that similarity of thought and similarity of phrase in any such degree as has, so far as I know, ever been shown, is no adequate proof of any connection between Xenophon and Plato, except the connection given by common discipleship with Socrates. Beyond doubt Socrates had his favorite turns of expression and his unconscious mannerisms of speech like other men, and it can hardly be supposed that these were not remembered by Socrates' followers, along with the substance of his observations and questions. I think, too, that teachers, at least, would generally agree, on the basis of their own experience, that the trivial in such cases is very apt to be remembered along with the important.

With this rather brief consideration of Xenophon's workmanship in *Memorabilia*, I should now like to pass to the picture of

¹ This is Maier's way of designating all of the *Memorabilia* except i. 1 and 2.

Socrates which is given in the same work. One of the most noticeable words in the *Memorabilia* is the adjective *ὠφέλιμος* and its cognates. The idea of utility, indeed, runs like a thread through the whole work, and perhaps as much as any one thought gives unity to the whole. The thought of what is pleasurable, too, is not infrequently considered and emphasized. It is perhaps this aspect which has led some moderns to distort the facts in their report of Xenophon's representation of Socrates. Thus again Maier—I quote from him often because his work, *Sokrates*, better and more elaborately than any other that I know, gathers together recent work on Socrates and is in considerable measure typical of its trend—Maier, then, says (pp. 306 f.): “The way in which the viewpoint of utility and happiness prevails throughout has a startling effect. Egoism as the principle of the moral life has not been proclaimed in more crass fashion even by a Mandeville, a Bolingbroke, a Chesterfield.¹ . . . In short it appears quite as if the final goal of all human will and action were for the Socrates of the *Memorabilia*, the attainment of the most lasting and intensive joys possible.”² This harsh—and absurd—judgment is somewhat qualified later, but the grossness of the distortion it contains is apparent when we recall the idealistic Socrates that the *Memorabilia* also presents, who “never chose the more pleasurable instead of what was better” (iv. 8. 11); who “counted it of greater importance to keep his oath than he did to conciliate the populace contrary to right, or to guard himself against his intimidators” (i. 1. 18); who “chose rather to observe the laws and die than to break them and live” (iv. 4. 4.).³ The truth of the matter is, as Maier also (pp. 312–14) is obliged to recognize, that Socrates was utilitarian, hedonist, and idealist all in one; following the ideal of high prin-

¹ Perhaps there is no significance in the fact, but it may be noted in passing that all three of Maier's examples are Englishmen.

² Mahaffy, *Classical Greek Literature*, II, ii, 79, has a similar statement: “[Socrates'] philosophy [is] represented as a mere refined and calm Hedonism.”

³ Among other passages that might be cited are iv. 5. 11, τὰ . . . ἀγαθὰ προαιρεῖσθαι (in contrast to τὰ ἥδιιστα); iii. 9. 4, καλὰ τε ἀγαθὰ γιγνώσκοντα χρῆσθαι, and 5, τὰ . . . δίκαια . . . καλὰ τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι; ii. 1. 28, τῶν . . . ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν οὐδὲν ἀνευ πόνου καὶ ἐπιμελείας κτλ., and indeed the whole of the “Choice of Heracles”; i. 2. 63, κακοῦ οὐδενός . . . αἷτιος κτλ; ii. 7. 10, Θάνατον . . . προαιρετέον ἦν.

ciple was for him the most truly and most permanently happy course; it was the course which he believed brought the greatest gain. Xenophon may not sum up the matter quite in this way, but his words clearly lead hither,¹ and they are, moreover, despite some difference of emphasis, substantially in agreement with those of Plato on this point.²

The religious side of Socrates also may be touched upon. Here again Xenophon is said to caricature Socrates and attribute to him his own grossly superstitious ideas.³ Incidentally it might be remarked that one who speaks of the *superstition* of Xenophon really puts himself intellectually, if not also religiously, in a past age. Even the fairly conservative revisers of our English Bible may suggest this to us, when in the American Revision they change the older wording and make Paul speak of the Athenians no longer as "too superstitious," but as "very religious." The latter seems the proper term to apply both to Xenophon and to Socrates. They were religious, not always exactly as we now practice religion, yet from the standpoint of their age certainly truly religious. For Socrates himself with all his rationalizing was, theologically, far from being a rationalist. There was in his nature a very deep strain of religious feeling, not to say mysticism. Indeed, one would think that no fact is better evidenced about Socrates than his implicit belief in, and reliance upon, divine direction in all phases of his life. Even the evidence of Plato alone shows us how thoroughly the religion of Socrates was permeated by a characteristically Greek conservatism. We find Plato's Socrates, for example, praying to the sun, as well as distinctly implying that the sun was a god, and flouting Anaxagoras' theory that it was a stone;⁴

¹ Cf. (e.g.) *Mem.* iv. 5. 12, ἀπλούς τε καὶ εὐδαιμονεστάτους . . . καὶ . . . δυνατωτάτους.

² Plato's Socrates, also, is both utilitarian (cf. the argument of *Crito*, 53B-54A; *Protag.* 333D; *Meno*, 87E) and hedonist (*Protag.* 354BC; *Repub.* 354A), as well as idealist.

³ Cf. Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, II, 87; 135; L. Robin, in *L'Année Philosophique* XXI (1910), 14; Maier, *Sokrates*, 6.

⁴ Plat. *Symp.* 220D; *Apol.* 26DE (cf. *Phaedo* 97C-99D; Xen. *Mem.* iv. 7. 7). In the face of this attitude on Socrates' part, Gomperz dares to charge Xenophon with being "uninfluenced by . . . Anaxagoras" (p. 135).

praying also to Pan and the nymphs; asserting his belief, in an especial degree, in the gods; showing profound confidence in the god of Delphi, and, what to us perhaps seems equally strange, in dreams; believing apparently also in the value of sacrifice and of divination; saying, further, that God's will had been revealed to him not only "from oracles and from dreams," but "in every way in which a divine appointment ever came to any man to do anything whatsoever."¹ This is enough, I think, to show that Socrates had the same kind of "superstition" in him as did Xenophon.

Perhaps the worst example, however, in this particular direction of the perverted sort of report of the *Memorabilia* which is often given is in a little book by A. Busse, entitled *Sokrates*—a not uninteresting, though very careless, sketch published in 1914 and presenting Socrates as the great teacher. Busse writes: "The relation between the gods and men Xenophon would have us believe that Socrates presented as a sort of contractual relation, on the basis of which those who bring the largest sacrifices may also count on the greatest services in return, in the shape of prophecies and blessings of every sort."² Now Xenophon was no mystic; his senses were keenly alive, as indeed those of most Greeks were to this present world, but he and his Socrates stood at the widest remove from any such conception of religion as this. On the one hand the two passages from *Memorabilia* which Busse cites, i. 4. 18 and iv. 3. 17, are far from proving his statement. In the former Socrates says in effect: When you do a service to a man you find out whether he is grateful; in the same way make trial, by doing the gods service, and see whether they are willing to give you counsel about matters which are hidden from men and you will come to feel that the divine power is both omniscient and omni-

¹ Cf. Plat. *Phaedrus* 279B; *Apol.* 35D; (on Delphi) *Apol.* 20E-21B; *Phaedrus* 244AB; *Repub.* 427B; (dreams) *Crito* 44A; *Phaedo* 60E; (sacrifice) *Phaedo* 118, 108A; (divination) *Ion* 534CD; *Phaedrus* 244BC, *Symp.* 188B (cf. what seem to be Plato's own more skeptical ideas of divination in *Phileb.* 67B; *Politicus* 290C; *Tim.* 71D-72B; *Laws* 913B); *Apol.* 33C.

² Busse, *Sokrates*, p. 198: "Die Beziehung zwischen den Göttern und Menschen soll er als eine Art Kontraktverhältnis dargestellt haben, auf Grund dessen derjenige, welcher die grössten Opfer darbringe, auch auf die grössten Gegendienste in Form von Weissagungen und allerlei Glücksgütern rechnen dürfe." Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, II, 136, is almost as far from the truth.

present. And in the other passage: When a man offers sacrifices he must do it according to his ability; for if he falls short of this, there is plainly no honor to the gods in the offering; but if one does honor the gods unstintingly (*κατὰ δύναμιν*) one may confidently hope for the greatest blessings. Such doctrine is not perhaps fashionable in certain circles at the present day, yet even so I think it is safe to say that Xenophon's statements require only minor changes, of form rather than of spirit, to bring them into conformity with the belief of the vast majority of modern Christians. On the positive side in refutation of Busse's assertion it seems sufficient to cite just one passage from *Memorabilia* (i. 3. 3). The repudiation of the mechanical type of religion could hardly be put more strongly than it is here: "Life," says Xenophon's Socrates, "would not be worth living for men, if the size of the sacrifice determined the favor of the gods," and as nearly as a devout man may, he says also that it would not, in that case, be worth living by the gods either!

Finally a few words need to be said about the general quality of Xenophon's picture of Socrates. We are told that it is trivial and commonplace; this Socrates is merely the correct and law-abiding burger; a matter-of-fact preacher of morals; an obtrusive pedant; a very philistine of a schoolmaster; a tiresome pattern of virtue.¹ The trouble with most of these criticisms of Xenophon is that they really hit, not him, but Socrates, much as their authors would probably deny any such intention. Plato's *Apology* and *Crito* furnish abundant evidence for just the same sort of Socrates—a Socrates who insists, with wearisome elaboration of argument, on obeying the laws of the state to his own hurt, instead of overriding them as does any truly strong man; who is eternally harping on the subject of mere morality and neglecting—even denouncing—that pursuit of wealth from which of course all progress in civilization issues; who splits hairs and quibbles even when on trial for his life; who is entirely lacking in tact and

¹ Cf. Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, II, 137 f.; "loyalen und korrekten Staatsbürger," "philiströsen Sittenprediger" (Busse, *Sokrates*, p. 11); "aufdringlicher Pedant," "philisterhafter Schulmeister," "langweiliger Tugendspiegel und unerträglicher Tugendschwätzer" (Maier, *Sokrates*, p. 6). Similarly Wendland, *Anaximenes von Lampsakos*, p. 70.

taste, yet feels himself so much too good for the generation to which he belongs, that he refuses to conciliate the jury of his peers as any sensible man would, but instead defies them and insolently demands to be made a state pensioner—in return, if you please, for subverting the very fundamentals of the democracy and its religion. Can we not still hear “the practical man,” the materialist, the sleek ultra-orthodox church-goer of ancient Athens applying such language to that ancient Billy Sunday who gave them no peace, but bored them by everlastingly talking of the bourgeois virtues, and in such vulgar fashion, too, with constant references to cobblers and tanners and asses and manure-baskets and the itch and what not?

But in a sense Xenophon’s tale of Socrates *is* trivial and commonplace. Though it does not lack its flashes of fire, yet compared with Plato’s work it is in many parts very matter of fact. Nevertheless, I venture to say that it is *an immeasurably greater* Socrates that is known to us because of Xenophon’s book. It is one thing to be able to wrestle with the great problems of human life, of society—that is, in summary, Plato’s Socrates: grand, inspiring, but in many ways essentially removed from the petty round of every day—very largely a superman. Xenophon shows us the still greater *man*, who can walk both in the higher world of ideas and also in this vexing and more pressing world in which most of us live; who, further, was not above being touched by the lesser problems of individual humans, but, on the contrary, in the midst of such problems always showed the true spirit of helpfulness. I believe that the Socrates who brought philosophy down to earth would own that this also was a true photograph.

Only so of course is Plato’s. And just this is what I would urge in conclusion: that this great figure of Socrates was not one-sided but many-sided—not a very startling conclusion, to be sure. Indeed it has been many times expressed before.¹ Yet even those who have made it have often failed to formulate, or at least in practice to recognize, what is, I think, a real corollary, viz., if

¹ E.g., by I. Bruns, *Lit. Porträt*, pp. 375 f.; E. Boutroux, *Études d’Histoire de la Philosophie*, p. 89; C. M. Bakewell, *Intern. Jour. of Ethics*, XX, 12; Busse, *Sokrates*, Vorwort; Maier, *Sokrates*, p. 166.

Socrates was many-sided, it is natural that men who themselves had different tastes and interests should have *seen* different sides. Therefore the pictures they draw, though different, may yet be entirely true, provided only Socrates was really great enough to have had more than one side. And I think we all agree that he was.

May we not then hope that the time will come when scholars will cease to say, "Plato knew Socrates most intimately and had himself the greatest mind of any of Socrates' followers: therefore *he* comprehended him best and his writings only shall be our test-stone";¹ or, in the case of others, "Xenophon was sane and practical and not given to airy flights of imagination: therefore *he* is likely to have given us Socrates as he really was";² or still again, "Aristotle with his cold, logical mind, and removed sufficiently in time to have true perspective, is best qualified to give us the true Socrates: by him will we test all other reports";³ or again, "Away with these professional defenders with their idealized and largely imaginary portrayals of Socrates: the Socrates whom Aristophanes caricatured in the *Clouds* is the real Socrates."⁴ Shall we not, I say, cease to take such attitudes, and believe rather that Xenophon *and* Plato, Antisthenes and Aeschines (so far as we can know the contents of their work), Aristotle, yes, and Aristophanes too, *all* throw light⁵ for us upon that great, and for this very reason puzzling, figure? Should not the norm for critical purposes be, not any single writer's photograph, but a *composite picture*, in which each particular picture enters in full measure?

¹ So, in substance, Burnet and Maier.

² Cf. A. Döring, *Die Lehre des Sokrates*; Pfeiderer, *Sokrates und Plato*, p. 107; and, in part, E. Boutroux, *Études d'Histoire de la Philosophie*, p. 17.

³ So, in part, Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, II, 64 f.; Windelband, *Hist. of Anc. Phil.*, p. 124; Epstein, *Studien zur Gesch. u. Kritik der Sokratik*, p. 19; Joël.

⁴ Cf. Starkie, ed. Aristoph. *Clouds*, pp. xxx ff.

⁵ Gercke's idea (*Einleitung in die Altertumswissenschaft*, II, 366) that *none* of our witnesses are of any value, that "truth and fiction are so inextricably interwoven in the Socratic dialogue-literature, that, except the execution, hardly anything is certain" in the statements about Socrates' life, we may perhaps, without being thought cavalier, decline to consider. One wonders, indeed, how Gercke could bring himself to accept even the execution as historic. R. Pöhlmann in his *Sokratische Studien* is almost equally skeptical.